

There Is Still a Riddle Wrapped in the Russian Enigma

MAY MAN PREVAIL? An Inquiry Into the Facts and Fictions of Foreign Policy. By Erich Fromm. 252 pp. New York: Doubleday & Co. Cloth, \$4.50. Paper, 95 cents.

By BARBARA WARD

ERICH FROMM'S urgent questioning of the Western powers' basic strategy should be read and pondered by every responsible citizen, for if this psychoanalyst and political writer is right, some of the presuppositions upon which Western policy is based are in fact wrong—and not only wrong but disastrous as well.

He argues that today the Western bloc and the Russian bloc—like Catholic and Protestant in the seventeenth century—are locked in an ideological strait-jacket of fear and distrust such that each side sees the other as an *absolute* threat, the survival of the one depending upon the annihilation of the other. So long as this overmastering fear continues, so long as the West believes in

Russia's ultimate determination to conquer the world—"we shall bury you"—any Western concession or conciliation appears simply to prepare the way for further retreat. Positions grow rigid. The margin of what is negotiable vanishes. And the world drifts toward atomic war.

But, argues Mr. Fromm, Russia is not bent on world revolution and world conquest. It may talk the ritual jargon of Marxism-Leninism. It is in fact a conservative, managerial nation-state as aware as the West of the insane dangers of nuclear war. Its chief fear—an eminently understandable one—is of a revived, rearmed Germany in alliance with the West. A subsidiary fear is Communist China's apparent unwillingness to accept the fact that a nuclear holocaust will fall on Communist and anti-Communist alike. Russia's desire, therefore, is genuine both for a settlement of the German issue and for disarmament before Germany and China come to possess nuclear arms. Russia is not pushing forward its power aggressively in every corner

of the globe—the revolutions round the world are not Communist-inspired; they are radical, popular revolutions in the wake of collapsing empires. The West's defensive reactions of fear and near-panic are thus unjustified. Worse, they threaten to precipitate atomic destruction.

Mr. Fromm argues his case forcefully and cogently, and much that he says has the ring of truth. The black-white confrontation of absolute good and absolute evil is always dangerous in politics. It is sobering to remember how often one cen-

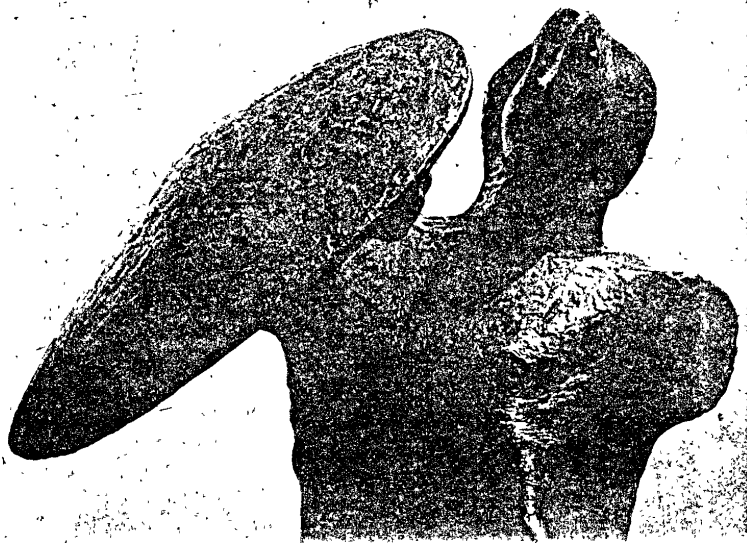
tury's demons have proved to be next century's neighbors—while atomic war might insure that this time there would be no "next century." The Russians have not always imposed their control where they had the power to do so. Cuba, Laos and Vietnam may point in the direction of a global Soviet ambition. But one recalls the Western laments over Egypt, Iraq, Guinea, Indonesia—yet all, in varying degrees, are still unaligned and outside the Soviet camp. Indeed, Mr. Fromm does not quote the most remarkable instance of Soviet restraint.

Would world conquerors have left Finland outside their orbit?

In Germany, too, it can be quite convincingly argued that the Russians are using Berlin not as a springboard for further attack but rather to consolidate their defensive control over Eastern Europe and to keep atomic weapons out of German hands. A broad acceptance of the status quo in central Europe could thus stabilize relations and even assist the central need—the search for disarmament. |

Yet here we reach the most

(Continued on Page 60)



Another Deterrent: Law

WHEN NATIONS DISAGREE. A Handbook on Peace Through Law. By Arthur Larson. 251 pp. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press. \$3.95.

By ERNEST A. GROSS

AVISIT to the Peace Palace at The Hague, seat of the International Court of Justice, is an inspiring experience, yet

working system for settling disputes, rather than an analysis of the diplomatic, institutional and legal processes by which a world order must be evolved.

Too narrow a definition of "world law" gives the phrase an ambivalence—even, perhaps, an ambiguity. It may have one or all of several meanings—

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finishes with the death of the paternal adventurer, Perken, whose last words are: "There is no death . . . there is only I . . . I who am dying."

The theme of death is omnipresent in Malraux's works, but Perken's last word is not the last word. "The Voices of Silence" and the "Metamorphosis of the Gods," as well as the three volumes of the "Musée Imaginaire de la Sculpture Mondiale" and the other essays, reveal an answer to this desperate man: there is death . . . but death is a conqueror, who is every day defeated by man's creation—and throughout all ages, both in his philosophical novels and in his books on art, Malraux ex-

angel." He might then make it obvious to his astonished contemporaries that the idea of happiness is as young as it appeared 170 years ago to St. Just, another eternal young man; that it is as daring an idea as Goethe discovered it to be when he had finally to finish his "Faust."

"He was more than a man, he was a century," said Victor Hugo of Voltaire with the rhetoric of his time. A few decades from now a young orator will perhaps apply this phrase to Malraux, the great writer who, when the battles of our time were raging, did not write but fought "for the power and the honor to be man."

There Is Still a Riddle

(Continued from Page 3)

perplexing of the Russian enigmas. Mr. Fromm finished his book before two events—America's acceptance of the principle of total disarmament and Russia's launching of new atomic tests in the atmosphere. Are they designed to speed up negotiations over Germany? Or are they testing the supermegaton bomb which is itself one step further towards the ultimate bomb which explodes the planet? How is the West to interpret the violence of Russia's new threats—"communities wiped out like flies"—or to condone the deception which kept its negotiators discussing controls over tests while a score of new ones were being secretly prepared?

Distrust in the West is not

all *furor theologicus*. There is the difficulty of reaching agreement with men for whom there all too often seems no distinction between truth and expediency. It is not ideology but common sense that demands the strictest controls over all agreements to disarm, and it is here, in the policing of any possible system of complete disarmament, that the test of Russia's intentions must be sought.

No doubt this ultimate, overriding and fundamental objective of disarmament will be better secured if the Western powers approach negotiation without ideological prejudice or self-righteousness. But the question remains: what will the Russians bring on their side in terms of candor and good faith?

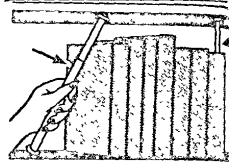
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THE NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW



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HIS DAYDREAMS WERE WORKS OF ART



THE COMPLETE RONALD FIRBANK. With a Preface. by Anthony Powell. 765 pp. New York: New Directions. \$7.75.

By ALUN R. JONES

THIRTY-FIVE years after his death Ronald Firbank is securely and agreeably lodged in literary history both as writer and legend. The legend of his personality has become part of the fabric of the English intellectual scene in the Nineteen Twenties; his novels continue to command the respectful attention of a small but influential body of readers. Of his ten published novels (he left two others in manuscript) and his one unsuccessful play, "The Princess Zoubaroff," at least four are unique, if minor, works of art.

Whatever the setting, whether England, Spain, Vienna or Haiti, whatever the plot and whatever the characters are called, together these novels chart the charming, absurd and narrow world of Firbank's imagination. His work has been admired by Edith and Osbert Sitwell, praised by E. M. Forster, and has exerted a direct influence on the novels of Aldous Huxley, Evelyn Waugh, Ivy Compton-Burnett, Angus Wilson and Anthony Powell, who has written the preface to the present volume. Limited in range and restricted in appeal as Firbank's novels are,

Ronald Firbank's Novels, Like His Life, Reflected an Exceedingly Odd Imagination



... was affected and pathologically shy. Once, in a famous London restaurant, he hid himself under the table rather than face the headwaiter.

The family fortunes were well founded by his grandfather, a laborer who, by combining attendance at night school with native genius, had amassed enough money from railways to keep the next two generations of Firbanks in comfort. He attended no school until he was 14; after two terms at Uppingham he traveled widely in Europe and was taught by a private tutor. Like so many others who have escaped the more normal academic processes, he came to prefer some authors to others. He so thoroughly absorbed the literature and atmosphere of the French and English *fin de siècle* that his first short story, "Odette d'Antrevernes," published privately when he was only 19, was an immature pastiche of the Eighteen Nineties mannerisms. After going up to Cambridge in 1906, he cultivated his personality on the approved Yellow Book lines; he gave riotous parties, developed sinuous gestures and a fluty voice, arranged himself against exotic backgrounds and was converted to Roman Catholicism.

THE first world war, which killed so

Ward, B., 1961: Review Fromm, E.: May Man Prevail? An Inquiry into the Facts and Fictions of Foreign Policy (1961a, English), In: New York Times Book Review, New York (5. 11. 1961), pp. 3.